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*Thompson's* Justification,

FOUNDED ON THE

Solid Principles of Truth and Public Virtue.

I N A

L E T T E R

T O T H E

Right Honourable the LORD MAYOR,

A N D

Court of COMMON COUNCIL of the City of LONDON:

COPIES of the same, with all the necessary Variations of Address and Form, being sent in a CONSTITUTIONAL Manner to all the FREEHOLDERS, CITIZENS and BURGESSES in all the SHIRES, COUNTIES, BOROUGHs, CORPORATIONS and CINQUE PORTS throughout ENGLAND and WALES, and the Town of BERWICK upon TWEED, and to all incorporated Bodies of BRITISH MERCHANTS and EMINENT COMPANIES of TRADESMEN, at Home and Abroad, according to their several CHARTERS and INSTITUTIONS.

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*Truth is irreversible, amiable and powerful, and (however strongly opposed) will at last prevail.*

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Written by *W. Thompson*, and printed upon Credit, at LONDON, October, 1761, for the Benefit of the present and all succeeding Generations of the People belonging to the *British Empire*.

# P R E A M B L E.

**T**H E intent of this Letter is to shew the reasonableness and necessity of making the Victualling the Royal Navy a parliamentary enquiry; and how irrational, ridiculous and impolitic are the notions of all those who have opposed me in my zealous endeavours to promote that momentous business of this nation being long since carried into immediate execution, from no other reason than because it is a government concern. It also shews the justifiableness of a parliamentary enquiry at this very time, from a precedent in a like case in Queen Ann's reign; which may be seen in the printed report of the commissioners, who were then appointed to sit many years successively, to take, examine, and state the public accounts of the kingdom in those days: The truth of which may be also very amply proved by many passages of History, and by many persons now living. And herein I most humbly presume to think myself in a more particular manner justified for endeavouring to promote a like enquiry, as all my private and friendly remonstrances to proper persons, and at proper places, for redress of those grievances, were ever lighted, and myself always ill-treated for the same.



*To the Right Honourable the Lord  
Mayor, Recorder, Sheriffs, Aldermen,  
and Common-council-men of the City of  
London, in Common-council assembled  
My Lord and Gentlemen,*

\*\*\* A Y it please you to permit me to assure you  
\* M \* that I do not presume to address you in this  
\* \* \* manner, but with the most humble submission,  
\*\*\* and profound respect for your persons and  
councils; and with that deep sense which I have ever  
entertained of your being always willing to receive, and  
ready to promote, all things which are brought and  
laid before you in a regular manner, when they bring  
with them evident proof of their public utility:  
Wherefore I most humbly entreat, that you will in your  
unlimited goodness condescend to indulge me with  
leave to lay the following case before you in form, now  
you are in common-council assembled, for the sake of  
its being encouraged and brought to a speedy and good  
conclusion by your mature deliberations, and patriotic  
influence, if happily for the crown of England, and the  
community, its importance shall be found an object sig-  
nificant enough to attract your regard, and justify your  
taking a part in a work, which has been depending a  
great many years to be heard before Parliament; and  
so to help, in conjunction with other incorporated  
members of the body politic, to accomplish those salu-  
tary purposes which I have therein ever intended for  
their mutual benefit.

My first, and chief object, is a well established  
navy; and, in the next place, to lay before you some  
hints relative to myself, and some remarkable occur-  
rences



rences which have happened in the course of my standing an advocate in the aforesaid cause, and soliciting its being heard in its proper place.

I AM confident it would be altogether needless in me to point out to you, if I were even able, how far the interest of every individual of these kingdoms is concerned in a well established navy; and how far the several persons and properties of all orders and degrees of the people belonging to the British empire (as they either remain at home, or are extending themselves in an universal traffick throughout every quarter of the globe) may be exposed to sundry calamities in the time of a perilous war, through the want of our navy being well looked into, and put into a respectable condition; and therefore I shall forbear troubling you with unnecessary remarks on those very essential matters in this place (as I have, in a public manner, already explained my sense of the necessity there is to keep up good government in the navy) and shall confine myself to such particular parts only, which, as they are facts, will answer for themselves, and on that score will bear holding up to the view of all good and wise men.

I PRESUME it will be easily admitted that the more our navy becomes dreaded by our enemies, the more, in proportion to their confusion, it becomes admired and valued by ourselves.

THE superlative blessings which its formidableness continually convey and secure to us, under the Divine favour, needs no further explanation from me, more than is absolutely fitting to introduce the subject cause of this address, in order to excite your attention to it. Your superior order in life makes you abler to judge of the sweets and happiness of a well directed navy than I can be supposed to be, in the depressed condition which I am, by cruelty, sunk into. Upon the foregoing principles, and in consideration of many disappointments which have ever crossed my good intentions  
to



to serve the crown and the community effectually, in the well victualling the navy, I resolved to write and publish, as far as I was able, my late treatise, under the title of *An Appeal to the Public*; but the difficulty of procuring it to be duly attended to, either as to its public utility, or of my own private interest, presses me, as a citizen of London, to make this application; and, as I have before done, to beg leave to submit its contents to be consider'd by yourselves, in your own proper character, of an incorporate and respectable body of merchants and eminent traders; and that you will please to compare, with candour and impartiality, such interesting passages in it as are most familiar to your own knowledge of maritime affairs, the constitutional laws and true interest of this nation, and the equity of my being punished in a cause wherein I was discharging, faithfully, that religious duty which every man owes to his God, to his King, to his Country, and to himself; and being suffered to remain unpitied, unnoticed, and unrelieved! any otherwise than as I have set forth in page 56 of my aforesaid *Appeal*, &c. And since I have declined that mean and slavish life of seeking relief in the manner I have done some time past (and in which I have also been frequently most grossly ill-treated, besides being abused with the obnoxious imputation of being a liar, &c.) I have not had wherewith to provide common subsistence for myself and helpless wife, and dejected child, but through the benevolent present which I received at the hands of a very eminent and humane merchant, belonging to a very great and respectable company of merchants in London, on the 10th of last month; and a very few more, together with the benevolent aid of my sincere friend, the Good Samaritan, whose stedfast friendship I have set forth in page 54 of my aforesaid *Appeal*, &c.

You will soon see by what follows that I have not made use of any formal dedication to my treatise, under the title of an *Appeal* &c. which I have inclosed with this, to confine it to any one in particular, so as to cause it to attract his attention to it, more than any other

other besides; because many have made a handle of the dedicating my first book, on *The Corrupt Practice of Virtualling the Navy*, entitled *The Royal Navy Mens Advocate* (and for which I have been libelled and ruined) to one member of parliament only, altho' it was natural for me so to do, because he was one of my representatives in parliament, and likewise an opulent merchant and alderman of the city of London: But should that piece of innocent and reasonable formality in me be a warrantable excuse to justify others for not meddling with it, unless my patron would first move to have the cause brought on to be heard in parliament? Those resources I must needs confess always appeared very extraordinary to my senses, and to my notions of patriotism, because the matter is of general importance to all as well as to any one in particular: Moreover, those who have read my aforesaid book, entitled *The Royal Navy Mens Advocate* (if they read it with an unprejudiced and clear understanding) must needs have seen in the very third page of that book, that I called for the 'help of all good men, to assist in this great cause I have undertaken;' what those people are who have impeded the due prosecuting of the cause, and have abused me, I submit to your candour and superior judgment. In order to destroy all such like unwarrantable objections for the future, so repugnant to the expectations and confidence their constituents repose in them, and their own interest withal, I declined dedicating my *Appeal*, &c. to any one in particular; and on the contrary (still adhering to my first principle) I have extended it to all; but more particularly to the great and good of every denomination in these kingdoms, as may be seen in page 3 of the said treatise, because I am still humbly of opinion, now, as well as before, that every body must unavoidably (and undeniably have) an interest in it (so far as it relates to the public weal) in proportion to the estates and properties, which they, as Englishmen, are born to, and which they severally stand possessed of. I beg, and with due resignation, that I may be permitted to leave to yourselves to consider

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(after you have perused my said *Appeal, &c.*) how far I may be supposed to have performed my duty as an individual, so as to be justified in endeavouring with unwearied labour and very great expences, and unawed, to procure (as far as in my power lay) the navy of England being constantly supplied with wholesome and invigorating aliments only, to nourish and refresh the bodies of the seamen and marines who thereto belong; that being encouraged and properly supported by such supplies, honestly provided and well and carefully preserved, they might raise their minds in gratitude towards their faithful friends, with the highest sense of heroic bravery, and animate one another with sentiments of manly and invincible fortitude (which they must necessarily become inspired with, from good usage) to perform to the last extremity, and like true British warriors, the duty of their several appointments on every occasion. And

1<sup>st</sup>, WHETHER what I have already done, and caused to be done, in point of reformation of Victualling abuses, as practised in his majesty's service (exclusive of what I am further capable of doing) is not a duty worthy of having been performed by any one else, who might shine with dignity in a superior station, and in the greatest splendor on this earth, not excepting even majesty itself, if he, or the greatest minister of state could have been ever able to have known how to come at those necessary lights which I have published to all the world, and which I acquired meerly by dint of study and hard labour, in a close application to business when I was a practitioner in the victualling service, and since, with very great fatigue, expence and speculation.

2<sup>dly</sup>, WHETHER in rectifying, and causing to be rectified, abuses (which were most glaring and shocking) in the practice of victualling the navy, I have acted therein the part of a prudent and warm-hearted friend to my king, to his ministers of all sorts, and to my native Country in general; or that of a madman, or a lurking



lurking or open Enemy to any one, or all of them, so as to deserve the base treatment which has been most inhumanly inflicted on me, and my innocent family, in the course of my zealous endeavours to stay the rapid hand of murder on our brave fellow subjects, and gallant Defenders; by whose valour we may naturally imagine, in a moral sense, that we have been freed from that consternation which we were seized with; and saved from the terrible dangers wherewith we were threatened at the opening of the present war (as well as in the last) of being invaded by the French; and from the dreadful consequence which would have ensued from the implacable rage of that inveterate enemy, if they could have landed their hostile armies on our shore, and penetrated into the bowels of our own Country: It is undeniable that That is what they have ever been meditating, and how they could most effectually spoil us, and overturn the order of the church and state, and thereby cause England to become a province of France. \* I mention *order*, as being a more familiar word than *government*, and for no other reason than because many have made use of the latter as a technical and scare-crow term, to frighten

\* Thurot (that little hero)'s exploit at Carrickfergus, the great and terrible panic and confusion which his petty invasion caused throughout these kingdoms, the alarm that bold enterprise spread all over Europe, the great disorder the inhabitants of that place were thrown into, and the material damages they then sustained in the time of the short excursion of that little rabble French tribe, are so recent as will alone, I humbly presume, sufficiently justify this remark.

I hope I shall not greatly offend in also bringing to remembrance at this time, the mischief and horrors that the French spread at Bengal, and the piercing scenes of woe which they basely perpetrated at Zell, and how astonishingly furious they raged there with brutal madness, being so amazingly wanton and inhuman in their obscenity and cruelties, that the chastest virgins, and the most honourable of the women at that unhappy place, with all their moving intreaties, affecting tears, and shrieking cries, did not avail to save them from those violences, which in bitter agonies they were unavoidably compelled to submit to; and in whose former peaceful habitations, and in every open street and public place, which were before set apart for soft ease and retirement, nothing was then to be seen but shocking distress, distraction, and deep mourning.

frighten me, as I apprehend, and to excuse themselves from being concerned, either in promoting the accounts of the Victualling Office being inspected (which were copied out at a very great expence to the public) which were presented for that purpose to Parliament, the 22d of January, 1759, by the late admiral Boscawen; as in like manner the Victualling-Office, together with the accounts of other public offices, were inspected in Queen Ann's reign; or even countenancing me, in the ruined state which I am brought into on this very interesting public occasion, with a little part only of their superfluous fortune, in order to preserve myself and very infirm family, from perishing through the want of the common necessities of life (after having endured all the miseries and mischiefs which have befall us, through no other cause than my publishing unblemished truth) 'till that just, kingly, and national cause should be enquired into by Parliament, with that circumspection, candour, and uprightness as becomes the character of British Patriots. I most humbly beg your pardon, for preferring to your notice, in this place, the foregoing remark on Government, but, as it is of a very significant nature, and just withal, I hope it will be the readier forgiven, as also my expatiating a little further on that principle, because it has been made a handle of against me; and more especially as I still remain in a very distressed condition, owing, in a great measure, to that very term, *Government*, being frequently applied to me, by many, as a sufficient reason to justify them in not relieving me, when I have applied to them for that purpose only; and notwithstanding I have distinctly assured them at those certain times, that I did not solicit their charity for any other purpose than to raise a capital to enable me to discharge all my incumbrances, and with means to return into my own proper business, which I was taken out of, on the Government's account; and which was barbarously accomplished by means of the officers of the government rigidly prosecuting me for publishing the truth of those heinous practices which had been grievously de-

trimental to Government, and which they were notwithstanding pleased to procure to be made a Libel.

No doubt but that, in your more refined notions of equity, loyalty and strict justice, all this will appear to you to be very hard and wonderful indeed; and more especially when, in your great humanity, you shall be pleased to consider that my wife is, and has been extremely ill five months last past, and all that time been under the charitable care of a very humane and eminent Physician in my own neighbourhood, and that I have not any thing to procure her common nourishment, but what little matters I obtain by chance, thro' the generosity of such few well disposed gentlemen and ladies, who hearing of my very unparallel'd hardships have sometimes made me the kind present of a guinea, as I am able to get abroad to make application, when I am relieved from the grief and embarrassment of my own home, in attending my affectionate and sick wife; or from that benevolent friend, as I before observed, by whose humanity and superlative goodness, myself and family have hitherto been principally succoured and kept alive throughout all our misfortunes.—In proceeding to expatiate on the frightful term, Government, I most humbly beg leave to shew, that it has not only been productive of the foregoing bad consequences, together with its being industriously given out, and positively insisted on, that I am mad, justifying themselves, as they think, in that vile aspersion, by confidently asserting that my meddling with the Government business, which they say did no way belong to me, is an undeniable proof of my being out of my senses! but it has been the means of my relations withdrawing their favour and affection from me; and by their being basely imposed on in false accounts, and my running a madding after Government, as the enemies to good Government have industriously reported, and do so still, I have thereby sustained very lately very considerable damages.

HOWEVER,



HOWEVER, it must certainly be allowed that there would not have been any room for rebuking me with the term Government, if the proper officers in the Government service had done their duty (as becomes good servants) and to whom a redress of Victualling abuses appertains; or that they had not ever slighted my frequently repeated private and friendly remonstrances to them on that head. I presume that it will hardly be imagined, but that my mind must become greatly alarmed, and that I must in consequence be strangely confounded and staggered in my thoughts about Government, to find out what that structure is, and what it is moulded of, when it has been thus played off as an argument against itself, against me and against every body; especially when it is moreover believed and confessed, that what I published of abuses in the practice of victualling the navy, in the behalf of Government, was strictly true, and that the existence of our navy principally depends on its being well victualled.

My prosecutors in their information against me (which was very virulent and opprobrious) read in an open court of Judicature, confessed that the navy was the bulwark of these Kingdoms; and I presume it will be also admitted, that it is likewise the mainstay of our Colonies and Settlements abroad. I could not therefore figure to myself, on duly meditating on that cramp term Government (if it was good Government that was at those certain times meant which I have alluded to) that it was in fact, and in substance, any thing else than good order. From good order, I have ever experienced good manners has proceeded; and that good manners is the produce of good breeding, I presume is every where allowed; and when those amiable perfections are put into practice as they become ingrafted, and rise up by a natural gradation into the minds of a civilized people, they, by those means, become possessed of amiable moral virtues, which have ever been the basis that all great and good Governments have been wisely founded upon, and ever

afterwards as wisely supported; and on which permanent  
 rock every friend to this Government has the high satis-  
 faction of being assured by royal authority, that his most  
 sacred Majesty firmly purposes to build his upon. I  
 humbly apprehend that it is rational to expect, that those  
 who obediently conform to good order, from principle,  
 and with a becoming spirit of manliness, do not only  
 make themselves respectable in the eyes of strangers, as  
 a civilized people, and even to its country's declared  
 enemies, but it distinguishes them also with the honour-  
 able appellation of being good subjects. Here I humbly  
 beg pardon for this display of my thoughts, as I do not  
 mean to affront any one: And I hope I do not; for I  
 have not put forth these sentiments with any other view,  
 principally, than for the sake of a general reformation  
 of men and manners (as I intend to make this letter pub-  
 lick, correspondent to that well compiled Treatise lately  
 published, entitled *A Mirror for the Rulers of the People*;  
 and being more particularly encouraged therein by his  
 majesty's declaration, signed at Carleton-House, the 26th  
 of October, 1760, wherein it is expressly said (speaking  
 of the weight of Government) 'I feel my own insuffi-  
 ciency to support it as I wish, but animated by the ten-  
 derest affection for this my native country, and depend-  
 ing on the advice, experience and abilities of your  
 lordships, on the support and assistance of every honest  
 man, I enter with cheerfulness into this arduous situa-  
 tion, &c.' His majesty has also confirmed, and ex-  
 plained his own meaning on good Government, in his  
 first most shining, pathetic, and most gracious Speech  
 from the Throne, to his first Parliament, the 18th of  
 November following, as well as in his preceding Pro-  
 clamations of the 29th, wherein he exhorts, as well as by  
 his own good example of oeconomy in his own household,  
 all his subjects to conform, and particularly those [as I  
 humbly conceive is therein comprehended] who are near  
 his royal person, and who hold any office under him in  
 the church, state, law, army and navy. To this it may  
 reasonably be expected I should add, that I mean also to  
 justify my own conduct; and so I do, and therefore  
 shall

shall do it further than I have hitherto (under favour) and in the same familiar and plain, honest and simple manner as I have done all along, because the afore recited causes extort it from me; and on those considerations, it is humbly presumed I shall be justified by this judicious court, and every sensible and unprejudiced Briton, as being but natural and right in me to set about; and now I proceed to shew how absolutely necessary it is that all those finesses, and absurd notions of Government, ought to be treated and exploded, for the future, from the minds of all rational beings, who desire to be thought great, wise, good, and just Christians and subjects.

It is a very great consolation to me in my pungent afflictions, that I am unjustly censured with being a fool, a madman and a liar. A liar is every where allowed to be a knave: The fool is often an object of laughter; and the madman is dreaded when he is tormented and made outrageous, even by those who think themselves most in their senses. The knave I disown, as being no part of me, and as to the fool, or the madman, we shall soon see (without having respect to mens dignity, and persons, when it shall appear from their behaviour there is none due to them) who those characters best suit.

A MODERATE freedom, and the spirit of resentment of undeserved base usage, is universally allowed becoming the dignity of man. It is what Englishmen, in particular, are born to; and it is a privilege which the citizens of London have more in their power to support and enforce than any of their fellow subjects. It hath ever been esteemed true bravery to be constant, and boldly to persevere in distress, and to support to the last extremity a virtuous cause against all opponents. It is one of the highest and most desirable characteristics that man can attain, to be so brave, as never to give up a just and laudable undertaking out of fear or base complaisance to any unjust opponents severities, or by harkening to any terms which may be offered by them



them afterwards to compromise those dark deeds, which they may be ashamed to hear of again, and to see held up to public view, how glaringly their mischievous evil deeds cry aloud for vengeance, and being brought to their proper senses, to see the destruction and calamities their most egregiously bad behaviour has most miserably entailed on even their own offspring, as well as all future generations and themselves.

THE character of being virtuously brave, is what many a good man has not attained while he was alive, altho' the epithet has been given, with sacred honours paid to their memories soon after their decease; and by perseverance in good actions, many are withal held in perpetual remembrance and respect afterwards.— Christopher Columbus and Sir Hugh Middleton are well known instances of this truth, altho' they were ridiculed as madmen, for pretending to do impossibilities in the ages they lived in; tho' through the genius of the one he invented the method of conveying the beneficial and refreshing springs of the New River to London, from a little head of water, by such masterly ways and means as are now the admiration and delight of this age, and the joy of this great metropolis; but which project was at first condemned as an absurd chimaera, and the result of a distempered brain.

*former*

THE ~~latter~~, by deep study and mature reflection, clearly discovered the fruitful lands and golden mines of America; but was for a long time after he had disclosed his great talents and sound penetration, stigmatized with madness, for presuming to prove it to be an inhabited quarter of the terrestrial globe, even by the sages and great men in his own time, who were then in power.—Now the several kings in Europe are such good judges of its intrinsic value, that they have not scrupled to make it a bone of contention, and withal have not hesitated to fix various parts of it, as an appendage and additional dignity, to the state and grandeur of their crowns; but, that the possession and commerce

merce of that wealthy spot of land, cannot be preserved by any monarch without a powerful navy, is evident to a demonstration. The peculiar benefits which arise from these two recited instances, I humbly presume, those who enjoy the sweets and profits of them, can best account for. From these two circumstances therefore, it is evident that great matters spring from small beginnings, and that honey is to be extracted from the most contemptible flowers, by the vigilant and industrious bee; altho' the charmer's voice be never so much spurned at and resisted by the drones, and heedless unthinking lethargic part of the multitude.

I HUMBLY beg pardon for this digression. I have no other design in introducing these two cases, than by way of illustration, as they have some analogy to the cause which I have espoused, and am still promoting for the public good, and my own. Forgive me therefore offering a fair question or two, for your judicious opinion, relative (and as a Christian charity, by way of admonition) to that class of men without doors, who must of course hear of it again (as I intend to make this letter general, and to ask all other candid gentlemen I send it to, the same free and fair questions) which I wish they may, and that it be of use to them, to cause them to mend their lives and conversation, from the conviction of their consciences, as well as from these hints; I mean those only who are cloaked under the beautiful robes of government of every hue, and that excuse themselves from assisting to support it, when their assistance is both grievously wanted, and loudly called for. 1<sup>st</sup>, Whether if it is to bad government, they hold themselves obliged for the principal part of their support and splendor (and some of them altogether the whole) they will be so hardy to answer yes. 2<sup>dly</sup>, If they insist that it is good government, which they accumulate very large fortunes and a most magnificent support from, what they can then fairly think themselves to be, fools, madmen or knaves. I do not expect indeed that they will for modesty sake speak out,

so

so as to be heard, voluntarily, and with the same freedom which they have, unlicensed, treated my character; which is now, through their malevolence lost, and what I ever esteemed the best portion I have ever enjoyed to build an easy fortune upon; both of which they have now robbed me of. That plain question on government, I presume it will be necessary for them to ponder upon, to prepare them for such answer as they can make, without shuddering, when it shall be asked them by those very persons who are gentlemen of probity, and illustrious in honour and integrity; and who are daily paying into the public treasury, extraordinary large sums of ready money for the support of government, but never, in the course of their whole lives, take the value of a single sixpenny piece out of it afterwards; and whether they will then, or can, with any sort of propriety think, that notwithstanding all their glaring deficiencies, they have still a right to be supported by that very same government, which they absolutely and flatly refused to aid, at those critical times of its emergencies, when they have been called upon and importuned to contribute their assistance to prop it up, especially when it evidently appeared to them to be tottering. These obstacles which I have here set forth, as some of the principal causes of the business of the public being impeded, and of putting a stop to a fair and regular enquiry into the state of victualling the navy, are strictly true, which makes me presume to hope that they will have a due weight in your candid councils, and justify me in laying them before you. If I were to point out any of the particular persons who have covered themselves under the term *government*, to excuse themselves from discharging, religiously, essential and much needed government duty, they would very probably think me extremely rude and uncivilized, and unpardonably impertinent. It is not to be doubted, but that those who have a desire to be thought good subjects, would be highly offended, if they were to find themselves marked down and impeached with the detestable characteristic of being very bad ones,



ones, if not extremely bad. I presume it would be thought very immodest in me, if I were to reply to any man, who opposes my warm desires to support government, that I was fearful he was not in his right mind, or that he was moved by selfish, or worse principles, when he should refuse to help to support good government, for the sake of the common cause. These are the real sentiments, gentlemen, which flow undisguised and unpolluted, in a pure stream from the heart of a faithful, unjustly abused, and grievously oppressed free born subject of England, and citizen of London; and which I as freely deliver to you, as they flowed from me in their genuine state; all which I have here amply unfolded, and rendered to you in their true order, and therewith, this humble tender once more repeated, that you will be pleased to debate on its national utility among yourselves in council, and the unjustifiable injuries which have been basely poured forth upon me on the occasion. Permit me to assure you, gentlemen, that I rely with an humble confidence on your natural and habitual propensity, and great character of promoting good works of a public utility, that you will not want to be influenced in this matter, by any motive more powerful to induce you to give attention to it, than your love of truth and public justice, without having any partial respect to persons in the cause, and of its being speedily carried into execution, as I do not desire to have any of that pernicious indulgence shewn towards me; and that you will act as consistent in your speculation into the merit of this great and national business, as may appear to you to demand your immediate notice and assistance, in your character of an incorporate body of merchants and eminent traders, in conjunction with all the rest of the freeholders, citizens and burgesses, of all the shires, cities, boroughs, corporations and cinque-ports throughout Great-Britain; all of whom I firmly purpose to send copies of this to, in a regular and constitutional manner, in opposition to servants of the government in any public office, who shall dare to oppose me by intercepting them; (and would therewith send my books

under the title of an *Appeal to the Public*, if I had enough of them, or were even able to reprint them) whereby you may justify your conduct before God and man, in exerting yourselves on this solemn and momentous affair, and in giving the lead (as the most important of all other corporations, and the first applied to in this case, and form) to all other incorporated bodies of the people; by putting forth your resolutions with the same true spirit of uprightness, wherewith you have on all emergent occasions approved yourselves (in such laudable actions) loyal subjects, and faithful guardians of this great metropolis, which has ever been extolled in all ages throughout the known world, for its wisdom and integrity, in sending forth to proper persons and to proper places, the great counsel of their great men, on every pressing public necessity, and therein to assist all in your power, to procure speedy and strict justice being done in the premises; to the crown of England, to yourselves, to your constituents, to all other your fellow subjects, to myself a much injured Briton, and to posterity.

As many have reflected upon me very presumingly, and have peremptorily insisted, that I published the grievances of victualling the navy in that horrible manner as they actually were practised, out of revenge, in that true account which I presented to the world in my treatise, entitled *The Royal Navy-Mens Advocate*, as well as those accounts which I published in several political news papers in the last war, on the same head; while others have unjustly asserted that I did it with a mean and ignoble intention to serve myself, rather than the public: I therefore humbly conceive it will be allowed to be quite necessary, at this time, to introduce what will soon follow (but much against my own free-will) both for the justifying my own innocence as to those uncivil aspersions, and to obviate and destroy the unmanly calumny which ill designing men have abused the credulous multitude with; and greatly to the prejudice of this public cause, and of my own character; it being a copy of my letter to a certain great respectable

able personage, dated the 22d of November, 1756, which was upwards of a fortnight before I had conceived even a single thought of writing a book upon the subject, viz.

“ Right Honourable Sir,

“ **T**HE report of your being, or to be appointed, to a great trust in the administration, induces me, as a little individual, who has a firm regard to my king and country, to throw in once more my mite, in well meaning for the good and safety of the above, and to assist in your honourably answering the expectations of all, in the discharge of your ministry, by seriously attending to that essential concern to his majesty and his kingdoms, the well victualling the Royal Navy; being assured, ships can be no other at sea than lumber, or floating logs, tho’ well built, well rigged, and stored with strong powder and ball, and well officer’d and manned, without wholesome provisions; impurity of provisions introducing corruption of blood, and many fatal causes incident thereto, disqualifying men from being able to work their ships, and quite unable to fight them. In the last war I was an eye-witness to many abusive practices in victualling the Royal Navy, some of which I set forth several times to the Admiralty board, and afterwards to many truly honourable members of Parliament, who, tho’ approving the usefulness of the matter, declared their minority was too great to introduce it to the House with success: So ended an intended general good, after the expence of much time, labour and money; the remembrance of which forbids me any more to meddle with state concerns, or going to council ’till I am called, having well burnt my fingers; but to be silent and inactive, in time of public danger, when a man thinks himself capable, and may peradventure perform a good act, is a neglect of duty he owes his king, his country and himself; and is carrying the resentment of a former disappointment to an unpardonable vice. I have preserved some of the copies of the bad practices of the victuallers, as tender’d to the Admiralty board, and members of Parliament, which I have no objection to shew at your request: If they are wanted, they are ready, without fee or favour, for I want none; but forgiving this liberty of a stranger, if unpleasing, and admitting the sense of honour I bear to your deference in station, having no merit to plead a further pardon, but that of a good subject, I am, Right Hon. Sir, respecting the report of your abilities and person,

*Your humble Servant,*

*Little Tower-Street,  
the 22d of Nov. 1756.*

“ William Thompson.”

To ———

NOTE,



NOTE, Altho' I never received any answer to the above, yet in justice to that great and well approved able statesman, I here declare that I have been credibly informed that himself, and many other patriot members of the hon. House of Commons, very warmly espoused my patron's motion for addressing his late majesty, the 14th of March, 1758, to give directions to lay before the House certain accounts of the victualling and navy offices, from January, 1753, to January, 1758; and that he and my patron, together with many other truly hon. members of that House, have since zealously debated on the importance of a well victualled navy, and the absolute necessity there is of entering into a parliamentary enquiry into the past and present state thereof.

It is most humbly submitted, that as the state of the case is very greatly changed since the date of the aforesaid letter, and as I have been most shamefully ruined and totally undone since, through my zeal to support good government in this cause, whether I have not now a justifiable right, in point of equity and strict justice, to expect a full and speedy recompence, and that without any longer delay, for the services which I have indisputably performed in favour of the crown of England, and these kingdoms and colonies, and of all our settlements abroad, which thereto belong; and ample restitution made me for the singular and great damages which I have sustained in the course of this undertaking, with compleat satisfaction made me for my other expences, time and labour, which I have bestowed (tho' a volunteer, by which it is presumed the more honour redounds) in watching, as a faithful sentinel, over the interest of my king and his royal house, and that of his people in all parts of the world; as well as those who are in safety at home.

I have the greater reason to justify myself in expecting this piece of natural justice being done me; because while I was pursuing the interest of the community, I was neglecting my own, and am now become a beggar by it. It is presumed, and without arrogance, that if I had confined my genius and abilities to the business I was bred to [and which some affected loyal souls have often reproved me for neglecting] and studiously employed my  
time

time and attention therein, as I have done to correct the abuses, as practised in the victualling department, I might have stood as fair a chance of being possessed of as easy a fortune as many others are; and that I am confident in: But, if that had happened to have been the case, what is it not rational to expect might have been the sad consequence to these kingdoms, if the navy of England had been destroyed through the want of supplies of wholesome food and nourishing liquids, and of some one or more intelligent and steady man than myself standing an advocate for such wholesome supplies, and exposing the baneful, and long accustomed base practices of victualling our navy men with such horrid provisions that Dogs have actually abhorred and ran away from? That has often been the case with those animals which I used frequently to offer ships provisions to, when I was in his majesty's victualling service, as I have set forth in page 20, of my Book entitled *The Royal Navy Mens Advocate*. To all this let me recommend to be considered under favour, Whether the French navy, at the opening of this war, was not then very formidable, and its strength then much dreaded by many of us? and whether it was not even a matter of doubt which of the two fleets would prevail when they should meet at sea? I mean the English or the French fleet. And if unhappily for us, the latter had been victorious, and only through the want of our seamen and marines being in a good plight to work and fight their ships, through base supplies of noxious victualling stores [which is well known to have been too often the case] whether after our fleets should have happened to have been destroyed by the French, as theirs are by ours, they would not long ago not only have struck terror into the very bowels, and throughout all our mother country, but have changed, to our inconsolable mortification, the state of things as they now stand in our favour, in both the Indies? And if after all these calamities being brought upon us, it should have been discovered, that I had it wholly in my power to have acted a great part to have prevented it, and had concealed my

my abilities, and refused my aid, in the critical time of danger, and that for the want of acting consistently with the character of a good subject in that case, for the support of the Government, of my own king, and my country, ruin had overtaken them; whether I should not then deservedly have had the epithet of a traitor bestowed upon me, in lieu of that of a madman, a fool, a liar, and an officious busy-body, for meddling with what did not concern me?

WHEN a man makes himself public on interesting matters, which particularly strike at, and affect individuals, especially such as are in office under the government, it is but too frequently experienced that the jarring voice of calumny and detraction are then instantly opened and raised to its greatest extent of vociferation, against him which they are, upon unjust principles, let loose upon. From thence the integrity of the object of their indignation and resentment not only becomes impeached, but his honour and reputation with the world (which is the most dear to virtuous minds) is also at stake. When it so happens to any man, the duty which he owes to himself, demands of him that he should support and defend his own veracity and innocence; which satisfaction is also expected to be given the abused multitude, who have a natural right to call upon him, civilly (as well as what his own reputation demands, and loudly insists on from his own heart) to do them and himself justice. In vindication of my own principles and public conduct I am therefore compelled further to put forth other facts (which I never did publicly before) and to lay them down before the public as evidences to be scrutinized, that they may by those indubitable testimonies be better able to form a sound judgment of the fallacious insinuations of disingenuous mortals, and the fidelity and uprightness of my conduct and intentions, and disinterestedness (otherwise than as an individual to partake among the whole of the benefit which might be derived to them in common from my labours) to serve the community, in time of danger, and



in their necessity: Be it therefore known, that I have at all times been steady and zealously endeavoured to promote the interest of the public, both when I was in the government service, and since my unjust discharge from it, in striving to procure a well victualled navy; and I have at times, since my unwarrantably being disgraced and discharged from his majesty's victualling office, London, entirely neglected my own business, and pushed on vigorously that of the public, especially when the latter hath stood more immediately in competition with the former, in the perilous time of war. Therefore for the sake of truth, together with my injured innocence, I am prevailed on, by my friends, to advance the additional proofs of my invariable attachment to a well victualled navy, and to truth, both in the foregoing and following assertions, which will clearly shew (if admitted as facts advanced by a man who despises liars, and scorns to tell a lie himself) to a demonstration the regard I have ever had for the more material and true interests of the crown and these kingdoms in preference to my own, which may be depended on to be indubitable facts; tho' I frankly confess I should have buried them in oblivion; had I not been urged by my friends, as their candid opinion, of its being at this time absolutely necessary to declare them. 1<sup>st</sup>, It was proposed to me in the last war, that if I would go into another country, and assist the people there with my knowledge to victual their navy, I might be assured of having 500*l*. a year settled on me, as long as I lived, besides being treated like a gentleman, and have distinguishable marks of honour confer'd on me. I despised the motion, and instantly rejected it, and at the same time assured the person who made the tender, that I rather chose to submit to live in misery and distress at home, and suffer myself to be tortured and abused by my own countrymen, than turn traitor to them, as great numbers of very useful, but egregiously misused Englishmen have done (which is too recent and notorious to need particularizing) and thereby entail a curse on the innocent and virtuous part of my country-folks in this age, and

and on those who may rise up in succeeding generations, merely for the sake of doing better for myself (that darling and present fashionable principle) or of being revenged of those obdurately guilty and abominable wicked individuals existing among us, either at this time or of late years. That part of my conduct is similar to my assertion in pages 57 and 58 of my *Royal Navy - Mens Advocate*, viz. 'I prefer a life of poverty, and to be accounted a man of sorrows, before conniving at wicked practices in any public employment.' And so I say still: And if I have not yet given sufficiently ample testimony of the foregoing to any set of government gentlemen (if they are all entitled to that appellation who are in government service) and that the discontented part of them have a mind to put the law further into motion, to make fuller experiments to satisfy their curiosity, or their rage, to prove my inflexibility, I am quite ready to stand the test, and to give them the most convincing proofs thereof, as they may please to contrive, order and dictate. 2<sup>dly</sup>, In some companies I have had occasion, by means of my being hard purged and put upon (and often with very indecent and unmanly behaviour) to shew the genuine reasons of my standing so very stiff as I always did, and still do, in support of a well victualled navy, to my own ruin, and that of my strictly meritorious innocent family, in preference to all other subjects of these kingdoms, especially as I saw myself deserted in the cause, and that no-body besides myself would meddle with it: In answer thereto I have declared, that I moved on the solid principles of public virtue, ever being ready to sacrifice my own private interest to the more superior interest of the community, and would, Roman-like, prove on all emergent occasions, that I was always ready to leap into the gulph to save Rome, and that tho' they may have been hitherto never so deaf, yet I hoped they would awake at last and open their eyes, and their ears, and their understanding withal, to let in such objects which it is their indisputable interest to admit, and duly consider, as being materially conducive to their peace.

In order to support my reputation, the credit of my veracity, and tenaciousness to promote the known interest of the public, I have also been under a necessity of reciting the foregoing tender which was made me to go into another country, to those inquisitors before alluded to, and by whom I have been most grossly insulted and ridiculed, and called an obstinate fool, for rejecting the aforesaid proposals, and who, among many other saucy impertinent questions, have taken the liberty of asking me, whether I knew of any other man in England that would do the same, besides myself; and at the same time those sensible animals have also taken other very indecent and disrespectful liberties of insulting my firmness in this national cause: To all which I have constantly replied to the same effect as I have before specified on the principles of public virtue. *3dly*, When I was under an unnatural prosecution, on account of my zeal to promote this national cause, the well victualling the navy, for every body's happiness, and on that occasion confined in that infernal-like prison, the Poultry-Compter, I was then urged by many people who wished me well, to make my unparalleled hard case known among the seamen in the royal navy, to excite relief from them, conceiving it to be very rational and fair in me so to do, seeing I was neglected and quite given up by those I had a natural right to expect succour from: The same advisers also very particularly observed to me (and very judiciously as they thought) in justification of their advice, that as my misfortunes arose through my zealous endeavours, to succour and preserve the navy-men, they ought in gratitude and common justice to support me, as I was their advocate to support them; and more especially, because no-body of fortune and in power would support me. The same people gave it me as their opinion, that they verily believed the seamen of England were so generous and grateful, that they would cheerfully raise a sum of money for me very quickly, if I would consent to make my case known to them. These marks of friendship were pressed on me to comply



ply with, at the time I was distressed and forsaken by every body, whom I had a just right to depend on for protection. Their advice, tho' well meant, and with no other than a humane and innocent design to procure me natural supplies in my extremities, I objected against and declined prosecuting. My reasons were then, as they have been since my enlargement to many other persons who have professed very great friendship for me, and who have done me some kind offices, and have strongly urged my applying to the seamen for relief, as follow, *viz.* That the seamen are generally very poor, their pay very small [but which I shall be extream glad that the legislative power would augment, for their own and the good of the public, for the same reasons which I have set forth in my *Appeal*, &c. page 48, in behalf of another class of people who are in the victualling service] and withal earned with very great labour, and under very great hardships, and frequently in the midst of many very singular great perils and dangers; and therefore I could not in conscience apply to them for relief, neither could I think that I had a legal right so to do, because I had voluntarily taken upon myself to plead their just, but grievous cause: And moreover I always observed at those times when I was urged to apply to the seamen for succour, that I was very apprehensive (conceiving them to be both a generous and warm hearted people towards their faithful friends, who do them good offices) that such an application might be of a very dangerous, if not of a fatal consequence; such as perhaps causing a mutiny. 4<sup>thly</sup> and 5<sup>thly</sup>, I have had offers made me, by and from different persons, that if I would consent to go abroad, they would provide places of profit, if I would accept of any of them, where, and by which, I might live like a gentleman the remainder of my life: It is further to be observed that one of these tenders was made me a very few days after the cause was tried, which I was prosecuted and imprisoned for, by one who was commissioned to let me know that a friend of mine, of many years acquaintance, dined about

about a day or some short space of time before the message was brought me, with one of his majesty's commissioners of the Victualling-Office, who then acknowledged to my aforesaid friend, that the facts which I had published, relating to the practices of victualling the navy, were very true, &c. and moreover, that if I would submit to ask my prosecutors pardon for what I had done, and would promise never to write against them any more, they would then [very humanely] forgive all that was past, would immediately set me at liberty, instantly provide me a very genteel employment, and very graciously send me abroad, as I have before hinted. Nay, what is still more wonderful, the very same commissioner was so extremely charitable and condescending as to assure my friend, that if I was actually such a very stiff man as I was represented to be, and so very tenacious of my honour and integrity that I would not submit to obtain my enlargement on the terms of making any sort of concession to my prosecutors, after they had totally and barbarously ruined me (one of whom declared to a merchant in my neighbourhood that he would ruin me if I was worth 10,000*l.* but by such a prosecution which I never heard the like of before; and that if he, my friend, would but write a letter to the victualling board in my favour; or if he would even shew but the least inclination only to him, the commissioner, to have me discharged out of prison, it would be sufficient, and I should be instantly set at liberty: But I remained obstinate, and would not comply with either request; because it would have been an injury done to the public cause, which I had espoused and was imprisoned for, and to my own honour and reputation, and a disgrace for me as being a votary for truth and public justice. My answer and resolutions to the foregoing, I sent in writing, which was afterwards returned to me at my request, and which I have now in my possession.

For a further proof of my principles in this matter, and of my justification therein, see my fundamental reasons

sons at the end of my printed Case, which I have refer'd to in the Postscript of this letter.

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*Your most dutiful and obedient Servant,*

*Little Tower Street.*

William Thompson.

## P O S T S C R I P T.

It will be a great satisfaction, and I shall esteem it a very great honour to have your candid opinion of the subject matter contained in this letter, and your resolutions concerning it; and also whether you received, two years since, my printed case which I then sent you, on the same subject of the corrupt practice of victualling the navy; but, as my extream great poverty renders me utterly unable to defray the expence of letters which may be conveyed to me by the General Post-Office (which is the method I have humbly presumed to use to circulate this by, and for which I beg your pardon and forgiveness) and as the principal part of the subject cause of my addressing you is business of high importance to the public, I hope it will incline you to honour this my humble request (if you think me worthy of so great a mark of your favour) with your Letters, franked, or any other way you may please to think more proper.



In order to support my reputation, the credit of my veracity, and tenaciousness to promote the known interest of the public, I have also been under a necessity of reciting the foregoing tender which was made me to go into another country, to those inquisitors before alluded to, and by whom I have been most grossly insulted and ridiculed, and called an obstinate fool, for rejecting the aforesaid proposals, and who, among many other saucy impertinent questions, have taken the liberty of asking me, whether I knew of any other man in England that would do the same, besides myself; and at the same time those sensible animals have also taken other very indecent and disrespectful liberties of insulting my firmness in this national cause: To all which I have constantly replied to the same effect as I have before specified on the principles of public virtue. *3dly*, When I was under an unnatural prosecution, on account of my zeal to promote this national cause, the well victualling the navy, for every body's happiness, and on that occasion confined in that infernal-like prison, the Poultry-Compter, I was then urged by many people who wished me well, to make my unparalleled hard case known among the seamen in the royal navy, to excite relief from them, conceiving it to be very rational and fair in me so to do, seeing I was neglected and quite given up by those I had a natural right to expect succour from: The same advisers also very particularly observed to me (and very judiciously as they thought) in justification of their advice, that as my misfortunes arose through my zealous endeavours, to succour and preserve the navy-men, they ought in gratitude and common justice to support me, as I was their advocate to support them; and more especially, because no-body of fortune and in power would support me. The same people gave it me as their opinion, that they verily believed the seamen of England were so generous and grateful, that they would chearfully raise a sum of money for me very quickly, if I would consent to make my case known to them. These marks of friendship were pressed on me to comply

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way you may please to think more proper.

N.B. As this Letter was first deliver'd to the City of London, the  
Form of Address therein made use of may not so fitly be adapted to the  
rest of the Corporations, &c. which it is hoped will be excused, as it  
would be difficult to contrive any one Form that would suit them all.